

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A STERN CHASE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

THE SECOND PART.

CHAPTER II. EPISODICAL.

DR. ROSSLYN, while aware of the disappointment that the non-arrival of a letter from Hugh inflicted upon Liliás, was also surprised at her inability to conceal her distress. Her usual self-restraint had failed on this occasion in a way which was not at all displeasing to her step-father. Mrs. Norton having remarked, in the subdued tone which she always used at breakfast-time, that Liliás was eating nothing, Dr. Rosslyn glanced over the edge of his Times, and observed that the girl's cheeks were pale, and that tears were stealing down them. He also caught the quick, appealing look, and slight shake of the head, by which she warned Mrs. Norton that her remark was inopportune, and although he gave no indication of having heard or seen anything, he was secretly very well pleased. Liliás was so essentially a "good girl"—so obedient, so unaccustomed to indulge or to consider herself—that she was just a little hard to make out at times; and this Dr. Rosslyn had recently begun to recognise as, if not a defect of her qualities, at least an inconvenience attendant upon them. She was now, however, betraying her feelings, much to his satisfaction. Her emotion was a good deal stronger than that which the most exemplary sister might have been expected to display under the circumstances, and this was just as it should be.

Dr. Rosslyn was annoyed with his son for not having written; he regarded this as an effect of the carelessness and irresponsibility, which came, he was persuaded, with

the chartered idleness and disorderliness of artist life, and would not have existed in Hugh's character, if he had embraced one of the respectable professions which oblige a man to method and punctuality. He did not, for his own part, feel the least solicitude or uneasiness, and the discomposure of Liliás he assigned to an acceptable cause.

Dr. Rosslyn desired, more strongly than he had desired any object set before him since his own second marriage, to see Liliás Merivale the wife of his son. In his dumb and distant way, and despite the prejudices and the lack of sympathy which rendered him so unapproachable, he cared a great deal for his son, and he cared even more for his step-daughter, for her mother's sake. He was honestly persuaded that such a marriage would be the very best fortune that could befall Hugh, and that it would secure the happiness of Liliás also.

It was characteristic of Dr. Rosslyn that his failure to impose his views and wishes upon Hugh in the only matter on which they had ever had a serious difference, did not inspire him with any misgiving respecting the probable success of his second experiment. The marriage would be a very good thing; it would suit his views and calculations; therefore it was bound to occur.

That Liliás had discovered the feelings with which she regarded Hugh to be other than sisterly, Dr. Rosslyn had recently become convinced. It would be easy and natural for Hugh to find, on his return, after an absence long enough to have broken the habits of the past, that he, too, could no longer keep up the fictitious fraternity.

It would have been pleasanter if he could have interpreted the feelings of Liliás by her unconcealed pleasure at receiving

a letter from Hugh, rather than by the disappointment she had manifested; but the confirmation of Dr. Rosslyn's wishes was not to be despised because it did not come in the brightest guise. He was altogether in a mood to be unusually gracious towards a visitor on business of an unprofessional nature, when Colonel Courtland called.

The tenant-aspirant of Lislee was a gentlemanly-looking, languid-mannered man of about fifty, with the fatigued and indifferent expression which long service in India, either civil or military, so frequently imparts. His general aspect was that of "done-up-ness"; his head drooped on one side, as though it were too much trouble to hold it straight; he sat on his chair in a telescopic fashion; and his voice was low and monotonous. He was still good-looking, but his face was curiously faded; and that he could ever be in a hurry, or take any vigorous action, was simply unimaginable. A cool suit of white jean, and a pith hat with a puggaree, was the costume suggested by his looks and manner; in that which he wore, though it was perfectly correct, he seemed ill at ease. "A modified Cuthbert Gurney without the Miss Falwassers," was the comparison that presented itself to Dr. Rosslyn's mind, as he contemplated the thin, stooping, chalky-faced gentleman, who, little as he looked the part, was a gallant soldier.

The Colonel opened the conversation by remarking upon the satisfactoriness of dealing with principals in all matters of business. He had been afraid of being referred to a lawyer, and he hated lawyers. Dr. Rosslyn explained that, in the present instance, the Colonel's satisfaction was technically misplaced; that Miss Merivale, and not himself, was the owner of Lislee; but that he had full powers to act for her. The Colonel then stated that he had heard of the place from its former occupant, but had not seen it; and that his wife's wish, prompted by old associations, had led him to look out for a "bungalow" in or about Choughton. A good school for his nephew, and a good garden for his wife, were his chief requirements; he understood there was a college of high reputation at Choughton, and that the garden at Lislee was a charming one for its extent. The Colonel proposed to visit the place, so soon as he had been furnished with the particulars for which he had come to Dr. Rosslyn. The interview then proceeded to the joint satisfaction of the two

gentlemen, and it ended in Dr. Rosslyn's asking the Colonel to dinner on the following day.

"I should like to come of all things," said the Colonel, "but I don't think I can manage it. I am in town for a week only, at Thomas's, and I have my nephew with me. I can't very well leave him to his own devices for a whole evening. I think I must ask leave to call on Miss Merivale instead."

"Let me suggest that you should bring the boy. I will answer for my daughter being very glad to see him."

This was settled, and the Colonel took his leave. It was so unusual for Dr. Rosslyn to make his appearance in the drawing-room until a few minutes before the announcement of dinner, that Lilies would have been surprised to see him there at any time; she was startled as well, when, after Colonel Courtland left him, he came to look for her. Her one engrossing thought made her find or fancy a reference to itself in every variation, however slight, from the customary order of things. She rose quickly from the piano-stool.

"Don't let me disturb you," said Dr. Rosslyn. "I have only come to tell you that Colonel Courtland has been with me, and that I think it will be all right about Lislee. He has not seen the place, and of course cannot decide until he has, but I have no doubt, from what he says, that he will take it."

He then went over the heads of the interview.

"How do you like Colonel Courtland, papa? What sort of man is he?"

"An odd sort of man, but rather taking; I should say he would want a day forty-eight hours long, to turn himself about in, and he looks as if India had completely pumped the energy out of him. But I should think he is a very amiable man. All his questions were directed to ascertaining whether Lislee was likely to suit his wife's tastes—he said nothing of his own—and he has a schoolboy-nephew up in town with him. That looks amiable, does it not? I asked him to dine with us tomorrow, and, as he would not leave the boy, I invited him also."

Lilies thought she need not repeat her question as to whether Dr. Rosslyn liked Colonel Courtland; the invitation to the nephew was a sufficient answer.

"I am sure he is very nice, papa, and I am glad the house will be off your mind. But I should like to see it."

"Of course. I am afraid, however, you will have to go to Choughton with Mrs. Norton, as Colonel Courtland wishes to get possession of Lisle with as little delay as possible. It will not do to wait for Hugh."

"No, it will not," assented Lillas, trying to speak without embarrassment.

"You had better settle it for next week, then, and tell Mrs. Norton about it to-morrow."

Lillas had rarely felt so much interest in any household event as in this unceremonious little dinner. She generally avoided preliminary knowledge of the dull but handsomely-provided entertainments which, in Mrs. Norton's opinion, did honour to Harley Street and credit to her own taste; but on the present occasion she felt personally concerned. Mrs. Norton, who was no more to be discomposed by an addition of two to the ordinary dinner-party than was Miss Austen's Mrs. Bennet of immortal memory, was, nevertheless, quite pleased to discuss with Lillas what sort of dainty dishes it would be well to place before an "Indian" and a schoolboy.

The two ladies had also to talk of the proposed visit to Choughton, and as an expedition about which many of her young lady acquaintances would not have thought anything at all, was an event in the monotonous life of Lillas and her friend, they grew positively excited over it. When Lillas was alone that night, and her thoughts obstinately reverted to Hugh and the suspense in which his silence held her, she realised how greatly she missed him, by the relief that anything out of the ordinary routine gave to her life of dull and uninteresting comfort without him.

It had been dull enough even before his last letter came, to add uneasiness and apprehension for him to the dreariness of his absence; but since then Lillas had not been able to forget herself in her books and music. She read, and she "practised"—as Mrs. Norton called her playing—with her usual diligence, but her mind did not follow her eyes or lead her fingers. Her active imagination was far away; seeing visions of the land in which Hugh had found his ideal, and of the girl who had realised it. This would have been delightful had it not been mingled with the fear, amounting to conviction, that a total rupture between Dr. Rosslyn and his son must ensue. And now the hope, so long entertained for her own sake, that as she reached womanhood she might be taken fully into her step-father's confidence, and

become of greater account in his life, was cherished more ardently in her unselfish heart, and every little indication of its fulfilment was greeted with greater eagerness for the sake of Hugh.

To gain such a position with Dr. Rosslyn as would enable her to venture to plead Hugh's cause; to interpose between the first impulse of anger and its outcome in word and deed; was the most she hoped, and there had been many little signs which she took for encouragement.

In reality, no two persons could have been more entirely at cross-purposes than were Dr. Rosslyn and Lillas, and never had their relations been so cordial.

If the occasion on which Lillas Merivale made the acquaintance of Colonel Courtland had not been destined to significance in her life for far different reasons, she might have remembered it as the first on which any man, except Hugh, had really pleased and interested her. The Colonel was totally unlike Dr. Rosslyn's "people of importance", nor did her experience of general society furnish her with a comparison for his simple courtesy, friendliness, and ease of manner, and his entertaining conversation, wide of range, without display, and quaintly quiet. He was one of those rare talkers, who draw out the best that is in other people. When Lillas and Mrs. Norton compared notes about him after dinner, their impressions tallied with unusual concord. Mrs. Norton was sure he had liked the curry; Lillas felt that she had gained a friend.

Colonel Courtland's nephew, a good-looking lad, with an olive complexion and dark-brown eyes, proved to be a favourable sample of the schoolboy, from the ladies' point of view. He was quiet and well-behaved, and although he was, naturally, bored when eating and drinking were replaced by talk only, he subdued the evidence of that state of things with resolution beyond his years.

Colonel Courtland, having heard from Dr. Rosslyn that Miss Merivale had never visited her little estate, but was intending to do so, requested that he might be allowed to meet the ladies at the railway-station, and take them to Lisle.

"I shall go down to Choughton, with Julian, on Thursday," said the Colonel, "to see the college and make acquaintance with the neighbourhood."

Lillas, perceiving that the proposal had her step-father's sanction, willingly assented,

and so the pleasantest evening that she had ever known—without Hugh—came to an end.

Little Choughton is a picturesque village, divided by a few miles of hill and vale from Great Choughton, a prosperous town of the genteel order, boasting several educational establishments of good repute, and a much-frequented Spa. Behind the town, which is built in a series of terraces, embowered in flowering trees, rises a noble range of famous hills, which extends far beyond it, and the village too, and in front lies a vast extent of richly-cultivated and beautifully-wooded plain. On this plain was transacted some of the most sanguinary business connected with the history of England in old times. Looking down from the grand hills in these peaceful days, one could as easily picture the age when the plain—rich in golden grain, stately timber, and green fields, with cattle and sheep like dots over the face of them—was an arm of the sea, as the time when it was the theatre of civil war. Cities, towns, hamlets, the splendid seats of great nobles, many ancestral homes of the untitled aristocracy, comfortable farmhouses, picturesque cottages where flowers and fever flourish with puzzling impartiality, church-spires innumerable, and winding roads bordered with trim hedges of almost irritating neatness; these are the objects over which the eye now wanders, to rest on the soft grey outline of a mountain range in the distance.

Among the ornamental places on the sloping border of the great plain, enjoying the mighty rampart shelter of the hills at their backs, and the broad light and free breeze of the expanse in front of them, was Lisle. The estate consisted of one hundred acres of very good land; eighty of them being leased to a farmer, and the remaining twenty laid out in a lawn, a shrubbery, a couple of paddocks, and the garden whose fame had attracted Colonel Courtland.

The house stood near the high-road, but was screened by a plantation, in which the beech, the ash, the larch, the acacia, the sycamore, and the oak mingled their various tints and forms with the sombre-green branches and the straight flame-coloured stems of Scotch firs of great height and age. This plantation, from the variety and beauty of its trees, was an object of mark. Local drivers would point their whips in its direction, and tell their stranger fares that "it is well known there's no finer timber to be

seen anywhere than Lisle Wood." The only point of grandeur about Lisle was its wood; the house was merely roomy, comfortable, and pretty. A wide space of smooth greensward, and the gravelled road which led to the stables, divided one side, with its long range of mullioned windows, from the plantation, which swept into a wide curve at a little distance beyond the house, and stretched downwards into the plain, thus setting a thick belt of wood on two sides of the grounds. The garden, attainable from a conservatory at the end of the drawing-rooms, was on the south side of the house; the entrance, through a porch covered with the sweet-scented white clematis, was on the north side; the western windows opened on an emerald lawn, shaded by two immemorial yews, whose velvety branches swept the ground. A wire fence divided the lawn and shrubberies from the paddocks, and a private way led from the stables to a lower road to Little Choughton; this road intersected the large farm of which Miss Merivale's eighty acres formed a portion.

Lisle, steeped in summer light; decked with flowers in prodigal profusion; fanned by a breeze, which carried to the sun-sprinkled plain the coolness of the hill-tops and the scent of the golden gorse that clothed them in its glory; melodious with the exultant song of the home-birds that stay with us, "year in, year out"; and all alive with the wheeling and dipping flight of the swallows that are but summer friends, was a fair scene for Lilies to look upon for the first time.

The rooms were bare of furniture, but the sunshine filled them, and Lilies inspected every part of the house, under the guidance of the gardener's wife, with lively curiosity and pleasure. Colonel Courtland did not exert himself to that extent. He took Mrs. Norton's report upon what he called the kitchen-department; walked about the drawing-rooms; looked into the conservatory; and asked to be shown the best bedroom, which commanded a fine view of the wood and plain.

"This will be just the thing for my wife," he remarked approvingly to Lilies; "she likes a good big room for herself and Nelly."

"Who is Nelly?"

"My wife's dog. She is the most easily-pleased person in the world, I assure you, Miss Merivale, but she is rather particular about Nelly."

With this he walked out of the house, and lay down at the foot of a tree on the

lawn, with the air of having entirely discharged his responsibilities, and being quite ready to wait for Liliás for a week or two.

"Really, anyone would think it was I who am to live in the house and not you," said Liliás, when she rejoined him on the lawn. She was perfectly at ease with this quiet Colonel, and felt as if she had known him a long time. "I have been over every inch of it. Don't you want any rooms for yourself? Don't you wish to see their shape, and size, and so on?"

"No, thank you," he replied. "I am quite satisfied with what I have seen. My wife will arrange the details."

Liliás wondered whether he had treated the business of placing his nephew at the college in the same cursory way, but she afterwards came to know that he had bestowed the utmost pains upon it. He was alive in the same vague way to the beauty of the place, and followed the ladies with gently-amused interest in their tour of the garden, which fully merited all that had been said in its praise.

From the outer gate in the south wall of the garden, Liliás caught sight of a pretty cottage, with casement windows, a little green porch covered with honeysuckle, a thatched roof, and a neatly-laid strip of white pebbles in front. At its back rose the outer edge of the wood. The gardener explained that "the wood cottage", as it was called, had been used as a laundry by the late occupants of Lislee, and was now unoccupied.

"I should like to live in it myself," thought Liliás, "and to give the house to Hugh and his wife. What pictures he would paint in this lovely place!"

The visit to Lislee was voted by all a great success. Colonel Courtland and his nephew returned to town with the ladies. The Colonel had established himself firmly in the good graces of both. Mrs. Norton was sure that a man who had so much feeling about a dog must be all excellence; she only wished Nelly had been a pug.

"I hope Mrs. Courtland is as nice as the Colonel," said Liliás to Dr. Rosslyn, in giving him an account of the expedition. "Do you know at all?"

"I don't; but I should think, from her evident supremacy and importance with him, she is a faded spoilt beauty, with nerves."

"Oh, papa! I hope you may be mistaken. I think you are in one thing. He will be the best of tenants, I am sure, but he has not the least idea of pottering."

ALCHEMY.

ANOTHER CHAPTER FROM THE ROMANCE OF SCIENCE.

"Mix together saltpetre, *luru vopo vir con utriet*, and sulphur, and you will make thunder and lightning, if you know the method of mixing them." So says Roger Bacon, in words supposed to form a recipe for making gunpowder. The instructions cannot be called very precise, but then it was the fashion of the day to conceal dangerous knowledge, and remained so for long after. Proof of this is afforded in the preface to Baptista Porta's *Natural Magic*, where the reader is told that the author "has guarded the most remarkable and excellent things by some artifice; those things which are noxious have been darkened, but not that the more ingenious cannot detect them," and so on. This sort of thing is just what makes up a good deal of alchemical lore.

The origin of the name—alchemy—is just as obscure as that of the thing itself. The first part of the word is undoubtedly the Arabic article "al"; but whence the other part was derived is a puzzle, which philologists do not seem to have yet settled among themselves. We do know, however, that out of what was anciently termed alchemy the modern science of chemistry has been developed. The Greeks and Romans, though well acquainted with processes for extracting metals from their ores, with glass-making, dyeing, etc., show no traces of any science similar to chemistry. The various chemical processes used in the arts, they left as trade secrets with the artisan, and the consequence was that not a few were lost, and have since been re-discovered. The philosophies of ancient Greece contained, in spite of this, a large amount of genuine chemical speculation. We may see this in the philosophy of Thales—B.C. 640-550—which held that water was the basis and original of all things. Earth was, according to this philosopher, simply condensed water; and air, water in a state of rarefaction. Anaximander of Miletus, a contemporary of Thales, on the other hand, held that air was the primary original element, for, being condensed, it became water, and, being further condensed, it became earth. These speculations of the Greek thinkers of two and a half thousand years ago are by no means the irrationalities that some may think, as it is only within the last hundred years that anything like a disproof

of them has been possible. The doctrine of Heraclitus—B.C. 460—that fire is the principle of all things, is another striking piece of speculation in chemical physics. And then we have the atomic theories of Leucippus and Democritus. A modern chemist, Professor Rodwell, says that “the definition of an atom given by Democritus is almost as precise as that which we find in our most modern treatises.” The strange thing is, that the ancient Greeks never seem to have dreamt of applying their speculations to the facts which were passing under their very eyes.

The stories told by alchemists of the Middle Ages of the origin of their art may be looked upon as purely apocryphal, whether they refer to Greek books on the science, or to Hermes Trismegistus, the supposed Egyptian founder of alchemy. The first authentic writer on the subject was Geber, whose real name was Abou-Moussah-Dschafar-a-Soli, a Sabæan of Harrañ, in Mesopotamia. He lived in the ninth century. The great object of the Arabs in this respect was the discovery of medicines. Geber wrote mostly on pharmaceutical chemistry.

By the odd confusion of words with things which has been the bane of science from the earliest times to the present day, the alchemists seem to have thought that, because gold was reckoned the most noble and valuable of metals, therefore medicines made of it would be of extreme efficacy. The difficulty was to make a solution, so that it could be administered. In trying to get over this difficulty, the alchemists succeeded in discovering the chief mineral acids—namely, the sulphuric, nitric, and hydrochloric acids.

Besides, gold being one of the most durable of metals—to all appearance everlasting—what could be more likely than that a medicine prepared from gold should be conducive to long life? Another difficulty here showed itself, and that was the scarcity of gold. If universal medicines should be prepared from gold, where was all the gold necessary to supply the demand to come from? The only way out of this difficulty was to make it. The question then arose—how? Here the cosmological theories of the Greeks, before referred to, came into play, and gave great probability to the success of the quest for the discovery of a method of manufacturing gold. The possibility of discovering such a method evidently depended upon the number,

natures, and mutual relations of the elementary bodies.

The doctrine which appeared most probable, as being supported by natural fact—and by what was of equal, if not greater importance, the venerable authority of Aristotle—is that which held there to be four elements in Nature, fire, air, earth, and water, to which Aristotle had added a fifth, namely, the ether, rarer and more subtle than the others. It was this fifth essence, or “quinta essentia”, which, through the medium of the schoolmen and alchemists of the Middle Ages, gave the word “quintessence” to the modern languages.

It can hardly be said, even to-day, that the transmutation of the elements into natural substances has altogether been disproved, when we know that water and carbonic acid gas—a species of air in the old chemical sense—are the chief substances which go to make up the substance of vegetables.

Geber held that the difference between metals depended upon the proportions of mercury and sulphur which they contained, and partly upon the purity or impurity of the mercury and sulphur which enter into the composition of each. All metals, to him, were compounds of mercury and sulphur.

“Silver,” for instance, “is a compound of much mercury and little sulphur, but in the gold, the sulphur is red.” “Iron is a compound of earthy mercury and earthy sulphur.” “Copper is an unclean sulphur.” “Tin consists of sulphur of small fixation, white with a whiteness not pure, not overcoming, but overcome, mixed with mercury partly fixed, and partly not fixed, white and impure.” We may easily see that such speculations are really genuine attempts at chemical theory, and perhaps the best possible at the time.

Alchemy was much studied in the Middle Ages by the schoolmen and doctors of the Church. Albertus Magnus wrote many treatises on the subject. Thomas Aquinas, known as the Angelical doctor, wrote on alchemy. He was a pupil of Albertus. Our own Roger Bacon was a most prolific writer on alchemy as well as on other scientific subjects.

It is from a treatise of his, “*De Secretis Operibus Artis et Naturæ et de Nullitate Magiæ*,” that the quotation with which this article began has been taken. There is also another interesting reference to gunpowder in the same treatise, as follows: “For sounds like thunder, and coruscations like light-

ning, may be made in the air, and they may be rendered more horrible than those of Nature herself. A small quantity of matter, properly prepared, not larger than the human thumb, may be made to produce a horrible noise and coruscation. And this may be done in many ways, by which a city or an army may be destroyed, as was the case when Gideon and his men broke their pitchers and exhibited their lamps, fire issuing out of them with inestimable noise destroyed an infinite number of the army of the Midianites."

It is to be noted that the English were the first in the West to use gunpowder in warlike operations, at the battle of Crecy, fought on August 26th, 1346, and no doubt it contributed in some degree to their victory.

Raymond Lully is another famous name in the history of alchemy. He is the first who mentions spirit-of-wine, terming it "aqua vita ardens" and "argentum vivum vegetabile". He employed mercury in medicine, and is said to have visited England, and to have made gold and silver for the King.

Basil Valentine is another great name in the science. He wrote in the fifteenth century. He was of opinion that the metals are compounds of salt, sulphur, and mercury. The philosopher's stone he held to be composed of the same ingredients. He affirmed that there existed a great similarity between the mode of purifying gold and curing the diseases of men, and that antimony was the best for both.

There is an order relating to alchemy of Edward the Third, made in 1329, which goes as follows: "Know all men, that we have been assured that John of Rous, and Master William of Dalby, know how to make silver by the art of Alchemy; that they have made it in former times, and still continue to make it; and considering that these men, by their art, and by making the precious metals, may be profitable to us and to our kingdom, we have commanded our well-beloved Thomas Carey to apprehend the aforesaid John and William, wherever they can be found, within liberties or without, and bring them to us, together with all the instruments of their art, under safe and sure custody."

Henry the Sixth prevailed upon Parliament to grant protection to "the three famous men, John Fauceby, John Kirkeby, and John Rayney," which was affirmed May 31st, 1456. The object of the researches of these philosophers was described to be "a

certain, most precious medicine, called by some the mother and queen of medicines; by some the inestimable glory; by others the philosopher's-stone; by others the elixir of life, which cures all curable diseases with ease, prolongs human life in perfect health and vigour of faculty to its utmost term; heals all healable wounds; is the most sovereign antidote against all poisons, and is capable of preserving to us and to our kingdom other great advantages, such as the transmutation of other metals into real and fine silver and gold."

It does not seem to be known whether "our beloved Thomas Carey" succeeded in catching the first two philosophers, nor whether the last three succeeded in their expectations, but the transactions show that our ancestors were fully alive to the profit of encouraging scientific research.

Fifty years prior to the date of the above-mentioned patent, Parliament had prohibited the manufacture of gold and silver, as possibly tending to make a subject more powerful than the King.

One of the most extraordinary names in the history of alchemy is that of Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim; better known by the name he gave himself, Paracelsus; in the sixteenth century. This personage was a strange mixture of quack, scientific man, and religious mystic. He is credited with bringing about a revolution in the study and practice of medicine. Before his time the study of medicine consisted in little besides getting up the works of old Arabic physicians like Avicenna and Rhazes, instead of going to Nature herself.

Paracelsus was the first to set the contrary example. He did good service in putting the medical profession on the track of cleanly and effective drugs. In his time, and even for long after, the medicinal efficacy of a drug seems to have been calculated to be in proportion to its filthiness. The nastier the dose, the more efficacious it was supposed to be. A favourite medicine of the Middle Ages was what was called "Mummy"; that is, Egyptian mummies ground to powder. It has been calculated that tons of this medicament, made of the corpses of ancient Egyptians, were swallowed by patients. Porta, in his book on natural magic, recommends gargling with the blood of a hedgehog as a cure for hoarseness. Mummy and hedgehogs'-blood are cleanly in comparison with some remedies which might be cited.

In the curious alchemical symbolism

which connected the metals with the planets, we have the first beginnings of a chemical nomenclature. The symbolism seems to be as old as astrology itself. Gold was symbolised by Sol, or the sun; silver by Luna, or the moon; iron by Mars; quicksilver by Mercury; tin by Jupiter; copper by Venus, and lead by Saturn. According to the alchemists there were seven metals, as there were seven planets, and seven days in the week; and as Jericho was encompassed seven days, and on the seventh day the walls fell at the blast of seven trumpets, which were carried round the walls seven times by seven priests.

Eventually, so far as the philosopher's-stone and the elixir of life were concerned, alchemy degenerated into hopelessly unintelligible mysticism, and gave way to chemistry, such as we know it. It is not at all difficult to understand why alchemical speculations should tend to mysticism, even if we discount the tendency to secrecy which was so rife in the science of the time. One of the greatest difficulties science has had to contend with, has been to find language which should accurately express purely scientific facts. The consequence has been that popular language, and even popular legend, have been resorted to. Where we should speak of effervescence, solution, and other chemical reactions, the old alchemists talked of sylphs, gnomes, spirits, and essences; all terms drawn from either legend, theology, or metaphysics, so, of course, swarming with meanings other than those intended to be conveyed, and thus capable of being perverted either from ignorance or by design. Some of the alchemists deliberately invented new words to express their meanings. Paracelsus invented the terms "laudanum" and "tartar". The word "gas" is a coinage of Van Helmont, a disciple of Paracelsus, and a remarkable personage in his day.

It seems very wonderful that the chief incentive to the study of alchemy should have held its ground for such a length of time as it did; that the disappointments of a thousand years should not have convinced scientific men of the hopelessness of the quest for the philosopher's-stone. Yet judging from a scientific point it is not so very wonderful after all. Even a great English chemist like Sir Humphry Davy refused to pronounce the alchemists in the wrong. The great French chemist, M. Dumas, affirmed the theoretical possibility of making gold, basing his belief on the fact of isomerism, or the

fact that there are substances both natural and artificial having the same percentage of composition and molecular elements, and yet exhibiting totally distinct chemical properties.

Alchemy was, any way, a bold prophecy of the science of which it was the predecessor. Modern chemistry, the well-endowed heir of ancient alchemy, has not ceased to search for the philosopher's-stone and elixir of life, though under other forms and under other names, and not at all unsuccessfully. Wealth far more precious than gold is produced unerringly by chemical processes in our common workshops. All colours, and shades of colours; perfumes and flavours; oil, and wax, and even medicinal drugs; start forth into existence, as part of everyday work, by the powerful alchemy of our day, and from the black, vile-smelling waste products of our gas-works, adding millions yearly to the wealth of the nation. Modern chemists are ferretting out and hunting down the causes of disease and of premature death, and seem very likely to be successful. So, after all, the philosopher's-stone and the elixir of life are in a fair way of being discovered, and the dream of the old alchemists is not unlikely to become the waking reality of our present-day world.

NOTES BY AN OLD PLAYGOER.

NAPOLEON THE FIRST was a great admirer of Mdle. Georges, but by no means lavish in his ideas of liberality. One day, however, after alluding in terms of satisfaction to her performance on the preceding evening, he signified his intention of bestowing on her a mark of his approval, and asked her what she would like best.

"Sire," she replied, "my great ambition is to possess a portrait of your Majesty."

"Your wish is easily gratified," said the Emperor with a smile; and, putting his hand in his pocket, he presented her with the desired effigy in the shape of—not, as she probably expected, a miniature enriched with diamonds, but—a five-franc piece!

I remember hearing that very clever little actor Colbrun, when at the Théâtre Historique, recount his earliest experience of the Parisian boards. It took place at the Gaité in a piece called *Le Massacre des Innocents*, the character allotted to him being that of a youthful victim pursued by assassins, and rushing on the stage in an agony of terror. On the first rehearsal

of the drama, notwithstanding the repeated admonitions of the managers, Montigny and Meyer, the débutant, far from entering into the spirit of the part, persisted in maintaining an indifferent attitude, betraying no symptom whatever of the fear with which his critical position ought necessarily to have inspired him.

"This will never do!" exclaimed Meyer.

"We must give the part to someone else," suggested the author.

"Stop a minute," said Montigny; "I think I can teach him how to do it. Come here, my lad," he continued, addressing Colbrun, "and remain exactly where I place you, with your face to the stage, and your back to me."

The unsuspecting youth did as he was told, and in another instant received a tremendous kick which completely lifted him off his legs, and sent him flying on the stage in a paroxysm of fright admirably adapted to the situation.

"There!" said Montigny approvingly, when his pupil had somewhat recovered his equilibrium, "that's the way to do it. Now mind and don't forget the gentle hint I have given you; for if you should, depend upon it, I shall always be ready with a reminder!"

When Poole was writing *Paul Pry*, he went occasionally to Brighton, to inspire himself with a "sniff of the briny"; and, happening to meet Liston there, the latter suggested, as an effective accessory, the introduction of Mr. Pry's famous umbrella—a "happy thought" at once adopted by the author, and not a little contributing to the success of the piece. This I give on the authority of my old friend, Captain Chamier, who had it from Poole's own lips.

The eccentric Academician, Viennet, whose tragedy of *Arbogaste* was soundly hissed on its production at the Théâtre Français, had a very exalted opinion of his talent as a writer of historical fiction. Meeting a friend one day, shortly after the publication of his *Tour de Montlhéry*, the latter happened to remark that it rather resembled *Walter Scott* in style. "Yes," replied Viennet with condescending urbanity; "but without his faults."

The subjoined anecdote of *Mdlle. Rachel* was related to me by *Janin*. A short time before her death, a diplomatic celebrity called at the villa where she was residing, at Cannes, and asked permission to pay his respects to her. On hearing his name, she gave orders that he should be admitted, and he paid her several visits, during one

of which he expressed a desire to possess a few words of her handwriting. "You are right to take time by the forelock," said the actress, smiling sadly, "in a little while it will be too late"; and presently handed to him the following only too prophetic lines. "In a week from this date I shall begin to be food for worms, and for writers of biography. RACHEL."

Whether the widely-read memoirs of *Carolina Bauer* may be relied on as strictly authentic or not, is a debateable question, but that she was a remarkably clever and versatile actress there can be no possible doubt. She was, moreover, extremely pretty, if I may judge from a portrait, engraved at Vienna, which has been many years in my possession, and which represents her as blonde, with dark-fringed and languishing eyes, and a slight but symmetrically proportioned figure. She appears to have excelled as well in youthful tragedy as in comedy, among her best parts being *Juliet*, *Donna Diana*, and *Scribe's Lectrice*, besides occasional essays in the then popular repertoires of *Iffland* and *Kotzebue*. No one appreciated her talent more cordially than the poet *Tieck*, with whom she was in constant correspondence. I have a letter addressed to him by her from *Mannheim*, but without date, a model of feminine caligraphy, and recounting her recent triumphs at *Prague*, where she played thirteen nights to crowded houses, was called before the curtain eleven times in one evening, and completely "annihilated *Mdlle. Heinefetter*!" The "*ci-devant Countess of Montgomery*" died in 1877, in her sixty-ninth year.

Off the stage *Drinkwater Meadows* was a singular character, and more than one instance of his originality is recorded in *Planché's Recollections*. *Charles Young* delighted in "taking a rise" out of him, and I remember his relating with great gusto a joke he had inflicted on his much-enduring colleague in the shop of a theatrical bookseller.

"Meadows," he began, "are you aware that our names were associated together before either you or I were born?"

"No," said Meadows. "What do you mean?"

"I'll show you," continued *Young*; and, taking up a volume of plays, turned to *Love in a Village*, and pointed triumphantly to the cast, in which prominently figured "*Young Meadows*."

"Well," retorted *Drinkwater*, "what does that prove?"

"Only this," gravely replied the tragedian:

"that you have the advantage of me; for while 'Young', I regret to say, is growing 'old', there can be no doubt whatever of 'Meadows' being eternally 'green'!"

I have read somewhere a droll anecdote of Armand Dailly, an old "sociétaire" of the Comédie Française, who in his time had been an excellent valet, but, from age and infirmity, was no longer capable of sustaining that line of parts as efficiently as when in the possession of his full powers. Certain characters, however, still remained to him by right of seniority, and in one of them belonging to the ancient repertory was a situation which never failed to excite the hilarity of the audience; it may, therefore be easily imagined that he made the most of it. The principal effect of this scene was the receipt by the "valet" of a kick administered by his master, and followed by divers contortions and grimaces on the part of the sufferer highly amusing to the spectator, and consequently regarded by Dailly as a safe card for eliciting a general roar.

It once happened that the piece was revived for the first appearance of a young actor fresh from the Conservatoire, to whose lot it fell to apply the traditional kick; and, during the rehearsals, Dailly continually impressed on him the absolute necessity of remembering it, which the youth faithfully promised to do. Unfortunately, when the critical moment arrived, either from nervousness or from an exaggerated idea of the respect due by a "pensionnaire" to his superior in grade, his courage failed him, and his foot remained suspended in the air, until he was recalled to a sense of his responsibility by the angry mutterings of the "valet", impatiently awaiting his effect, and incessantly repeating: "The kick, you idiotic bungler! The kick!"

A vaudeville with couplets is now a rarity on the French stage; that once favourite specialty, except as an occasional "lever de rideau" at a minor theatre, having become almost entirely extinct. In many respects the disappearance of the "flon flon" is not to be regretted, for it unquestionably impeded the action of the piece, and was, moreover, in the majority of cases, indifferently sung. Still, for old associations' sake, I have a kindly feeling for it, remembering, as I do, many a gracefully turned little gem exquisitely warbled by Madame Doche or Virginie Déjazet; not to mention those marvellously comic effusions of Duvert and Lauzanne, every point

in which was so inimitably "détaillé" by Arnal.

Clairville was perhaps the best couplet writer of his day, and certainly the most prolific. He laid great stress on the necessity of a perfectly harmonious versification, and seldom allowed a collaborator to interfere in what he considered his own particular line. His horror, then, may be imagined when, on delivering a piece to Nestor Roqueplan, then manager of the Variétés, and stating that he had not yet had time to finish the couplets, the Sultan of the Panoramas contemptuously interrupted him by saying: "Couplets! what does that matter? Any fool can do them. Leave your manuscript with the concierge of the theatre as you go out; he ought to understand that kind of thing, and will knock them off for you by to-morrow!"

"The young ladies of the Opera," once remarked the fashionable homœopath of the Empire, Dr. Cabarrus, "have more than one string to their bow. A colleague of mine was requested, not long ago, by the manager, to ascertain the cause of a sudden indisposition of Mdle. X——, a very pretty 'coryphée', who had been absent without leave from rehearsal. On entering her sumptuously furnished boudoir, he found her sitting by the fire, well wrapped up, and looking the picture of misery. 'Oh, doctor,' she said; 'I have just heard of the death of my poor grandmother, and the news has given me a terrible shock!' 'Pardon me, mademoiselle,' quietly replied her visitor, whose memory was more retentive than she imagined; 'if I am not very much mistaken, you have already several times deplored the loss of this venerable lady.' 'Oh no, doctor,' exclaimed the fair mourner, anxious to clear herself from the imputation; 'I give you my word of honour that she only died once before!'"

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

KENT. PART II.

WHEN the Wars of the Roses had come to an end, and a long-suffering people were vouchsafed a period of peace and tranquillity, Kent took the lead among the counties of England in general wealth and prosperity. The naval strength of England was concentrated in her ports; her merchants conducted most of the foreign trade of the kingdom; her manufacturers furnished the best part of England with

cloth, and exported the same commodity to foreign countries. There were ironworks, too, in the Weald among the forests which supplied the necessary charcoal; and the ordnance, which armed the national ships and fortresses, was mostly cast or moulded in the furnaces of Kent and Sussex. To these sources of prosperity must be added the eminence of Canterbury as the metropolis of the splendid hierarchy of the English Church; the centre of the pomp and ceremony of a gorgeous ritual; and the guardian of a shrine, which drew to it Christian pilgrims from every part of the then known world.

To understand the causes that made Becket's tomb the great centre of religious pilgrimage, we must realise the impression that Becket's murder made upon the imagination of the age. The sanctuary violated; the altar sprinkled with the blood of its chief priest; the open violence of the deed which struck at all that men held sacred; all this filled Christendom with horror and amazement. Once established as an object of pilgrimage, the celebrity and richness of the shrine, and the pleasantness and convenience of the ways that led to it, kept up its reputation among the great mass of thoughtless pilgrims.

And thus were made the long winding trackways—which generally avoid the deep miry grounds and thick woods, where robbers might lurk, and follow the skirts of the more open region of chalk or sand—trackways that are still marked by long lines of yew and thorn, and still retain the name of Pilgrim's Lane or Pilgrim's Way. These ways were thronged in the cheerful spring-tide with a perpetual train of pilgrims. Cheerful, festive groups: such as those famous pilgrims whom Chaucer conducts from the Tabard, in Southwark, to the shrine of Becket: everywhere sprinkled the country roads, and beguiled the way with stories as frank and jolly as those of the miller and the wife of Bath. Foreign pilgrims, too, swelled the train; numbers landed at Southampton, and trudged patiently over the downs of Hampshire and Surrey. The ports of Kent also were crowded with ships, whose living cargo was often a profitable freight of pilgrims, while the masts of the ships that lay in Sandwich haven in number suggested a forest, according to writers of the period.

Notable, too, at that time was the visit paid to the shrine of Becket during the last years of the old order of things, when the Emperor Charles the Fifth kept Whit-

suntide at Canterbury with King Henry the Eighth as his host, and with Cardinal Wolsey in attendance. Probably since the days when Henry the Second marched barefoot in penitence through Canterbury streets, and submitted to be scourged at the tomb of the martyr in the crypt, hardly a King of England had omitted to pay a respectful visit to the tomb of the great martyr. Foreign Princes, too, had knelt before the shrine—Louis the Seventh, first of all, who had known Becket, and who had given a priceless jewel as his offering to the memory of the saint. A less willing pilgrim was King John of France, who came first of all as a prisoner from the field of Poitiers, and finally, in more joyous mood, on his release, when his last gifts were made to the guardians of the shrine. But all these royal visits were outshone in splendour and importance when Harry the Eighth knelt at Becket's tomb with the successor of Charlemagne and the Cæsars, surrounded by the nobles of England and the grandes of Spain.

Of Becket's shrine there is no morsel left, but we may replace it in imagination in its chapel behind the high altar, between the tombs of the Black Prince and of Henry the Fourth; the base a massive structure of low arches, about which the halt and maimed were accustomed to crawl, hoping for some miraculous cure. Above was the actual shrine containing the remains of the saint, covered with a wooden canopy that at a given signal was raised with ropes and pulleys from the roof, displaying the wonders of the precious casket, inlaid with gold and enamelled with precious stones. Hundreds of silver bells about the canopy gave forth sweet music as the riches of the shrine were displayed; and at the sound all those about the cathedral and its precincts fell upon their knees, and put up their prayers.

Perhaps the sight of all this wealth had its effect upon the mind of the King. No such splendour, he might have thought, surrounded the royal crown or the regalia of England. And who was this Becket, after all? A man whom his royal predecessor had raised from the dust to defy the authority of the Crown of England! Certain it is that in after years the King attacked the memory of the saint with personal vindictiveness. According to a story current all over Europe, Thomas Becket was formally summoned to appear at Westminster Hall within thirty days,

charged with treason, contumacy, and rebellion. In default of an appearance, judgment was pronounced against the Archbishop—his bones to be publicly burnt, and the offerings forfeited to the Crown. Whether or not the award was thus formally given, the sentence was carried out with completeness. The name of Becket was hunted forth from calendar and Prayer Book; every symbol of the saint was effaced from missal, carving, or painted glass. But although no memorial of the Archbishop now remains in his own cathedral, it is curious to read in a service-book of the present time, "Ordre des offices, diocèse de Rouen. Le 28 Decembre. Aux vèpres. Memoire de St. Thomas de Contorbéri. Iste Sanctus."

Something must be said about the Nun of Kent, who came into note about the time of the suppression of the monasteries. Elizabeth Barton was a servant in the household of Thomas Cobb, bailiff of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Aldington, on the slope of a hill overlooking the wide plain of Romney Marsh. Elizabeth, having become subject to strange trances, probably of an epileptic nature, began to prophesy and make a stir in this quiet country place, which, however, was the object of a yearly pilgrimage, when considerable numbers resorted to a chapel in the parish, known as "Our Lady of Court, of Street". By these pilgrims the fame of Elizabeth was spread far and wide. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More spoke of her visions with respect, and the Archbishop considered her sayings as oracular. Elizabeth became a professed nun, and, taking up the cause of the divorced Queen Catherine, she prophesied the speedy downfall of Henry, should he marry Anne Boleyn. Unfortunately for Sister Elizabeth, and perhaps for the world in general, the prophecy was falsified by the event; the nun was denounced to the King's council, who had her brought to Tyburn, and there hanged with many of her associates; after which her head was affixed to the gateway of London Bridge, as a warning to the men of Kent when they came to visit the City.

The destruction of the monasteries in Kent, while it was a great blow to the prosperity of many of the inhabitants, was not unwelcome to many classes of the community. The yeoman, the peasant, the ploughman, might regret the past; but the trader, the grazier, the fruit-grower, and the hop-planter, were men of pro-

gress, and rejoiced in the change. The old saying,

Hops, reformation, bayes, and beere,
Came into England in the same yeere,

represents a change that was of considerable moment to Kent. From this time, if not before, Kent obtained the name of the Garden of England, and Hasted, the historian of the county, tells us "that Dr. Linacre first brought into this land the damask-rose, that prince of flowers; that the perdrigon plum, with two kinds more, were first made natives of this soil by Thomas, Lord Cromwell, when he returned from his travels; and that the apricot was brought to Kent by a priest named Wolf, who was gardener to King Henry the Eighth. In this reign, also, were first propagated among us hops and artichokes; and then were cherry-orchards first planted about Sittingbourne, with a more improved kind of that fruit, brought from Flanders by one Hayns, another of that King's gardeners. What effect Carden's recommendations of olive-trees had with King Henry the Eighth, I do not know; but in Queen Elizabeth's reign, after our opening a trade with Zante, the shrub which bears that excellent fruit the currant, was first transplanted here, as was the tulip flower in 1578." The black-currant, it may be said, was probably introduced into Kent by the French Protestants, and is still known there as the gazel, an evident corruption of groseille.

Lambarde, the perambulator of Kent in the reign of Elizabeth, writes more fully under Tenham, that "here our honest Papist, Richard Harrys, fruiterer to King Henry the Eighth, planted by his great art and rare industry the sweet cherry, the temperate pippin, the golden renate." While he further informs us that "this Tenham, with thirty other parishes, extending from Rainham to Blean Wood, be the cherry-garden and apple-orchard of Kent." At the same time, it must be said that here was wealth without health, if we are to credit the popular saying—

He that will not live long,
Let him dwell at Marston, Tenham, or Tong.

With the monks, however, went the vineyards, although Hasted records that Nicholas Toke, of Goddington Great Chart, who died in 1680, and who had been High Sheriff in 1663, had a vineyard on his estate, and, it may be inferred, made wine of his own vintage. If worthy Toke drank his own wine, it would seem to have proved a true elixir vitæ, for he is

recorded to have survived five wives, and to have walked to London, at the age of ninety-three, to seek a sixth.

But, indeed, the out-door cultivation of the vine on a small scale, and the making of wine, was carried on till within the memory of the present writer—perhaps is still, although surely the summers are no longer so full of sunshine, and the clusters of the vine do not now hang so thickly on the wall.

Some idea of the social state in the period that immediately followed the Reformation may be gathered from the annals of Faversham, a neat, old-fashioned town on a creek of the channel called the Swale, which cuts off the Isle of Sheppey from the mainland of Kent. At Faversham there once stood a famous old abbey, which had been the burial-place of King Stephen and Queen Matilda, and many other personages of high degree; but which is now only represented by some massive foundations and boundary-walls, and by an old-fashioned house which may have once been the residence of the steward of the abbey, and which is traditionally the scene of the following authentic narrative.

In the abbey-house, as it will be convenient to call it, dwelt, at the beginning of the short and troubled reign of Edward the Sixth, a well-to-do burgher named Thomas Ardern, a jurat of the town, who had also served as its mayor. The site and materials of the abbey, with the lands about it, had been granted at its dissolution to Sir Thomas Cheyney, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, a trusted servant of the late King, who had quickly disposed of his rights in favour of his worthy friend, Master Ardern. There were certain old tenants of the abbey who had held under the monks—probably under parole agreements, which had been deemed as secure as parchments, but which were utterly ignored by the new proprietor—and Ardern, by his harsh treatment of these old tenants, had incurred a good deal of well-deserved unpopularity. In contrast with the covetous, grasping character of Ardern was the free and generous nature of his wife Alice, a fair and fascinating woman, of strong, ill-regulated passions, and with a capacity for cruelty which belongs to the type of fair and florid Messalinas. Married in early youth to Ardern, who was much the elder, and probably without any choice of her own in the matter, Alice had borne him several children, but she was still in the

plenitude of her charms; and custom, instead of reconciling her to an unsympathetic husband, had only rendered him more distasteful to her. Ardern was in rank a gentleman, might write himself armiger, and was at least the equal of the rural gentry around; and his wife had brought him not only money, but money's worth in the shape of powerful connections. Alice Ardern is described as the daughter-in-law of Sir Edward North—perhaps she was his step-daughter, or possibly the relationship might have been closer but more irregular. Anyhow, it is evident that through this connection, Ardern had already secured sundry good things, and hoped for others—for Sir Edward was Chancellor of the Augmentation, the office most concerned with abbey-lands, and one of the sixteen executors under the late King's will.

Among the servants of Sir Edward North was one Mosbie, a tailor by trade, but in a position of trust and importance, a dark, swarthy fellow, who had formerly visited at Ardern's house on a familiar footing. Tailor or not, he seems to have been a well-favoured gallant, who wore a sword, and knew how to use it—such a tailor as Moroni has painted in that well-known portrait in the National Gallery, with satin doublet and velvet hose. Between Mosbie and Alice Ardern a strong attachment existed; but the cavalier, more prudent than the dame, had for some time avoided the dangerous society of Mistress Alice.

But some business of his lord's bringing Mosbie to Faversham, a love-token from his mistress brought him back to her feet. From this moment Alice made up her mind that she would lose him no more, and that every obstacle to their legitimate union should be ruthlessly swept away. Among the sufferers by her husband's harshness was one Green, who was threatened with eviction from the parcel of ground he had formerly held under the abbey, and who now went about vowing vengeance against Master Ardern. Even Ardern's own body-servant, Michael, detested his master, and it was he, perhaps, who first suggested to Mistress Alice the means of disposing of her husband. All the more, perhaps, did she harden her heart against him that, so far from showing jealousy at her preference for Mosbie, he complacently shut his eyes to their behaviour, and even made much of Mosbie, and invited him constantly to the house.

Had he stormed at her and beaten her she might have submitted. But now she derided as well as loathed him, and henceforward had no compunction.

Ardern was accustomed to make frequent journeys to London, for there was always law business in hand, writs and ejectments to be taken out against neighbours. With the abbey he had acquired the town lodging of the abbot, a lonely and roomy building in what is now the Borough High Street, and here Ardern was accustomed to sleep at nights, taking his meals at the ordinary of The Nag's Head Inn close by.

One day, when Ardern was on the point of starting for London, Michael suggested to his mistress—or she to him—what a happy thing if he should never return. The suggestion was imparted to Green, the threatened tenant. He, too, was going to London, probably to enter an appearance in Ardern's suit against him. Ardern started for London, cloaked and furred, riding his easy palfrey, and with his man on horseback behind him. Green had to tramp through the miry ways on foot. But before he started there was one who would have a word with him. Mistress Alice had something to whisper in his ear—"an end of the suit, a new lease fairly engrossed on parchment—money in thy pocket, but mind he must never win back home." And still Ardern rode on, quite unconscious of it all, wrapped up in his furs and cloaks, and still more wrapped up in the thought of how he would win this and that, adding house to house, and field to field.

On the way to London, Green met with the very man for the purpose he and the guilty wife had in view—a desperate ruffian named Black Will, who was ready to cut any number of throats for due consideration. Black Will went back to London with his new employer, and lying in wait outside Ardern's lodgings, they saw him come out, well-brushed and spruce, with Michael behind him, to take the customary walk on Powles—the cloister of Old St. Paul's, that was then the great mart for business or pleasure. Black Will was ready to kill the man there and then, and dispatch the serving-man into the bargain, but the other restrained his ardour for fear of the consequences to himself, and Black Will dodged his intended victim to St. Paul's, and lurked among the dark shadows behind the clustered columns, but found no convenient

opportunity for the deed. Michael, the treacherous man-servant, had seen the black villain lurking about, and was struck with mortal terror at the sight. Nor was he reassured when he was told by his friend Green how eager Black Will was to have the killing of him. But being too far engaged in the plot to retreat, Michael agreed that this night he would leave unfastened the door of his master's lodging, when Black Will should come and murder Ardern in his sleep. But horror and fear for his own life were too much for him, and he bolted and barred all the entrances to the gloomy conventual buildings, and the murderer was once more baffled.

Next day Ardern rode homewards, dogged all the way by the assassins. There were two of them now—Black Will had secured the services of another villain, named Shakebag, as ferocious and as great a coward as himself. The false serving-man, feigning that his horse had lamed itself, dropped behind, and his master rode on alone. But Ardern seemed to have a charmed life. Now one set of travellers, and now another—carriers with a train of pack-horses; country franklins with their serving-men kept him company. Gadshill was passed, and Rochester Bridge was crossed, and on Rainham Down, where was the last stretch of lonely open country before arriving at Faversham, Ardern was joined by a strong cavalcade, no other than Sir Thomas Cheyney himself, with his attendants.

The faithless wife saw, with bitter disappointment, her husband dismount at his own door. But soon her accomplices came to explain their failure. On the next occasion that Ardern rode out—and he had promised to visit Sir Thomas Cheyney at Shonland on the morrow—then the deed should be done. Mosbie was now acquainted with the plot. He had recoiled in horror from the suggestion of Ardern's murder; he had struggled to free himself from the terrible network of crime; but he could not tear himself from the arms of Alice; her strong nature dominated his weak one, and at last he entered into the murderous conspiracy.

Among other matters in which Ardern had incurred the ill-will of his neighbours, was his conduct in reference to the yearly fair which had been one of the privileges of the dissolved abbey. Ardern claimed all the ancient rights of the abbey under his grant, and he had compelled all the traders and stall-keepers who, by custom,

had set up their booths in the high-street of the town, to remove their booths into the privileged precincts, and pay his tolls and dues. Thus curses, not loud, but deep, were everywhere heard against the tyrant, and a violent death might well be the natural result of popular vengeance.

But, although daily dogged by his assassins, Ardern went about his business unharmed. Now one accident and now another interposed between him and the daggers of Black Will and his comrade. The ruffians engaged had evidently not the courage to face one fearless, resolute man, and Alice, finding all the attempts miscarry, resolved that the deed should be done where she herself could ensure its being done effectually. Accordingly, one evening, when Ardern had gone out, promising to return presently—for he had invited to supper two grocers from London, who were visiting at Faversham—Black Will and Shakebag were secretly let into the house, and concealed in one of the chambers that opened into the hall.

Ardern returned even earlier than he had been expected; called for his gown and slippers; and began to pace the hall, awaiting the return of his wife and Mosbie, who had gone out together. When they appeared, he greeted Mosbie cordially; his friend must stay and sup with him; he would take no denial. In the meantime, they would play a game at tables. All this had been foreseen by the conspirators; the game of tables was a matter of course when the two met, and even the signal for the murder had been settled: "Sir, I may take you." Michael placed the seats and the tables so that his master should sit with his back to the darkened chamber, where Black Will and his companion were hidden. Darkness had come on, and there was only the fitful light of the fire on the broad, open hearth to illumine the figures of the players, the lofty hall with its scanty oaken furniture, and the red-tiled floor strewn with fresh rushes. Ardern called for a light, and Michael, bringing a candle, stood and held it so that the light fell upon the board and the players, but left the corner of the hall where the assassins lurked in deep shadow.

Even then it seemed as if the signal would never be given. The game in its progress gave no occasion to Mosbie to take a man, and the signal was not given. But, step by step, the assassins were stealthily advancing, and the guilty wretch, with a convulsive grasp at the board,

faltered out: "Sir, I may take you." Ardern looked up in surprise, and at that moment Black Will threw a cloth over his face and dragged him down. Then he was dispatched with numerous blows and stabs.

No sooner was the deed effected, than the two hired assassins sullenly demanded the money they had earned, and hurried away. It was left to those in the house to efface the evidences of the crime. The body they raised and carried across the garden, and through a gate into the abbey enclosure, where they left it staring up to the darkened sky, while the shattered ruins of the abbey church looked down upon the scene. While this was doing, snow had been falling fast, and promised to cover everything with the white veil of oblivion.

And now Alice played her part with a coolness and determination worthy of Lady Macbeth. The servants of the house, other than those in the plot, had been sent out of the way on various pretexts. They were now returning, and were once more dismissed to search everywhere for their master, and bid him come to supper, for his guests were waiting. The guests themselves arrived—the two grocers from London. Alice's daughter played on the virginals for their amusement. The two grocers danced to the music, and Alice danced with them. As the evening went on, and Ardern failed to appear, Alice began to wail and weep. She called in her neighbours. Was ever such a thing known! Well, and lackaday!

In the early morning certain wayfarers caught sight of the body. The mayor was roused from his slumbers, and with a group of citizens hurried to the spot. There lay Master Thomas Ardern, jurat of the town, with the evident marks of a violent death upon him. There, too, in the thin crust of snow upon the ground—thin, because the fall had suddenly stopped, and had been succeeded by a sharp frost—there were footmarks in a double line leading to the murdered man's own garden gate. And then it was noticed that he was in his gown and slippers, and between his slippers and his stocking-feet certain rushes had been caught, plainly pointing to the conclusion to which all at once arrived: "Here is foul domestic treason and murder."

To search the house and obtain other convincing proofs was the next proceeding, and, confronted with the evidence of her guilt, Alice saw that all was lost, and made a full confession. Mosbie was arrested in

his bed at the Fleur-de-lys, and finding that all was known, made no denial of his guilt. A special commission was sent down, with Sir Thomas Cheyney as the chief, to try the offenders, who received stern and speedy justice. Michael, the serving-man, was hung in chains at Faversham; one of the maids was burnt there; Mosbie and his sister were hanged in chains at Smithfield; Mistress Arden was burnt at Canterbury. As for Green he escaped for the time, but was apprehended some years afterwards, and hanged on the highway between Ospringe and Faversham. The two hired assassins got safely away, and, if they both eventually came to violent ends, it was not in connection with Arden's murder.

It was long told in the neighbourhood how the grass would grow no more over the spot where Arden's body was found, while it was remembered that the field in which he lay murdered was one that he had taken from a poor widow.

The story of Arden's murder was dramatised during the reign of Elizabeth, and some have conjectured that Shakespeare himself had a hand in the play of "Arden, of Faversham". The play follows closely the narrative of Hollinshed's Chronicles, from which, no doubt, Shakespeare drew most of the materials of his historical dramas. But there is no trace of Shakespeare's hand, even in its apprentice stage, in the play itself, which might have been written by any of the hack playwrights of the period.

The next episode in Kentish history, although not long subsequent in date, reveals the altered state of feeling and rapid change in opinions that had come over monastic and Catholic Kent. Not far from Maidstone, a few miles higher up the river Medway, where it flows placidly through a rich and pleasant country, stand the picturesque ruins of Allington Castle, which in the reign of Henry the Eighth was the noble residence of Sir Thomas Wyatt, the delight of the muses and mankind. The Wyatts were originally a Yorkshire family, ardent partisans of the house of Lancaster. Sir Henry, the father of the poet, was imprisoned in the Tower by Richard the Third, and, according to tradition, was doomed to be starved to death in his dungeon, but was fed by a compassionate cat, whether upon mice or upon some other provender, does not appear. It is a mere coincidence that the poet-son should afterwards turn a set of verses on the subject of mice, although the opening

stanzas incidentally give such a pleasant picture of the quiet home-life of the poet's youth, that they are worth quoting:

My mother's maides when they do sowe and spinne,

They sing a song made of a feldish mouse,

That for because his hivel'od was but thinne,

Would needes go see her townish sister's house.

Sir Henry's sufferings in the good cause raised him to favour with King Henry the Seventh, and as a veteran captain he was equally acceptable to his successor. To the bluff old soldier succeeded the courtly polished poet; one of the gilded youth who hovered about the fascinating presence of Mistress Ann Boleyn. The jealousy of the amorous monarch drove Sir Thomas from Court, and at Allington Castle he lived the life of a country gentleman, after the fashion of the time, which he thus describes:

This maketh me at home to hunt and hawke,

And in fowle wether at my booke to sit;

In frost and snowe then with my bowe to stalke.

I am not nowe in Fraunce to judge the wine,

But I am here in Kent and Christendome,

Among the muses where I reade and rime.

Sir Thomas, however, was ready enough to return to Court when the King once more took him into favour, and, riding too eagerly towards Falmouth, to meet the Emperor's envoy, he was seized with sudden and fatal illness at Sherborne, in Dorset, and lies buried in the minster. Sir Thomas the second, his son, essayed to swim in the troubled seas of civil strife, and, connected by marriage with the Dudleys, he attempted, all too late, a rising against the now settled power of Queen Mary. The prospect of the Queen's marriage with the King of Spain was much disliked in Kent, where the Spaniards were detested as commercial rivals as well as religious opponents; and Sir Thomas, with his own tenants and a good muster of Kentish men, marched to London, and was almost within reach of the Lady Jane Grey and the other poor captives in the Tower. Had the Kentish men once more stormed London Bridge, the fate of the kingdom might have been changed. But the golden moment was lost, and the only result of the rising was to seal the fate of Lady Jane and her husband, while, soon after, Wyatt himself was executed.

When the Spaniards come into the field we are within measurable distance of the Armada; and we may judge what Kent could then furnish in the way of fighting men, from what is told us of the zeal of the sheriff, a whimsical but respect-

able figure, Sir Thomas Scott, of Scott's Hall: "Anno Dom., 1588, at the approach of the Spanish navie, uppon the counsell's letter sent to him on the Wensday, he sent four thousand armed men to Dover on Thursday."

And in this connection the Weald of Kent must not be forgotten, which makes its appearance in history after a silence that has dated from the rebellion of Wat Tyler.

The Weald of Kent is described—but, it would be easy to show, erroneously described—by a writer of the Elizabethan period, "as a desart and waste wilderness, not planted with townes or peopled with men, but stored and stuffed with heards of deere and droves of hogs only." But the seven hundreds of the Weald which were mustered under a bailiff of their own—and they have a bailiff of their own to this day—these seven divisions mustered to meet the Armada twelve hundred men or so, as well as hogs and deer. They could not boast of a great array of cavaliers. A mere handful of horsemen could be mustered, twenty-three in all; but there were a hundred and fifty archers, two hundred arquebusiers, fifty-six pike-men, and seven hundred and ninety-one bill-men.

A strange sight must have been that array of men of almost undiluted Saxon blood, who had changed but little, whether in apparel or weapons, since the Conquest, or, indeed, long before then. The "leather-legged chaps", Cobbett calls them, and, indeed, in their long leggings, smock-frocks, and carter-hats, the peasants of the Weald of the old-fashioned kind take the imagination back to the days of Hengist and Horsa. But the Weald of Kent, with its ancient industries, customs, and belongings, must serve to introduce another paper.

COUNT PAOLO'S RING.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER XV.

ANGELA did not speak or move. She felt that she had turned very pale, and that her heart was beating with a sick terror; but she struggled hard to maintain an outward composure, and looked gravely at the two intruders. They seemed at first a little discomposed by her steady gaze and cold silence, and the stranger, who was apparently an Englishman, looked slightly ashamed of himself, and glanced at the door, as if he would willingly have retired.

But it was closed, and monsieur was leaning against it. He gave a thick, husky laugh.

"Mademoiselle, I have brought a compatriot to see you," he said—"Major Clarige."

Angela bowed gravely, but she did not speak, though she started at the familiar name. M. Ruskoi laughed insolently.

"What, not a word, mademoiselle? We left the Ambassador's dinner early to pay our respects to you. Be not afraid, madame will not return for some hours yet," he added in an insolent tone, which brought an indignant flush to Angela's fair face.

She bit her lip angrily, and cast a quick look towards the door, but M. Ruskoi still stood there, and effectually barred her egress.

"Mademoiselle is pleased to play the prude," he said, and laughed again. "That is because of you, my friend. Madame is jealous of my visits to the schoolroom. Bah! she is jealous of every woman prettier and younger than herself. It matters not. Come, mademoiselle, sing for us."

The Englishman had not spoken; but he had watched the scene with amused, curious eyes. Angela saw that he, too, had taken more wine than was good for him, and for a moment her heart sank, and she felt faint with terror. Only for a moment, then her courage returned, and she forced a smile.

"Will monsieur choose his song?"

She went forward to the piano as she spoke, and opening it, pointed to the pile of music. Monsieur fell into the trap; he left the door and came to the piano, and began to turn over the music. As he turned, Angela, with a swift forward movement, gained the door. It was opened, and she safely without in the corridor, almost before monsieur's slow wits comprehended the ruse, or he had time to look round. In another moment she was in her bedroom, and had locked and bolted the door safely. She heard a string of violent expletives from monsieur, a loud laugh of derision from his friend. By-and-by their footsteps slowly retreated down the corridor.

Angela did not retire to bed for sometime, for she was agitated and frightened. She waited until she heard the carriage return from the ball which followed the Ambassador's dinner, and madame's step on the staircase, before at last she undressed and laid her aching head on the pillow. After some deliberation she resolved that

she would tell Mrs. Elliot of monsieur's visit and insulting words, and ask her advice as to whether it would be advisable, in order to prevent a recurrence of the annoying incident, to inform madame also of it. She carried this resolution into effect next morning. Mrs. Elliot listened and looked very grave.

"It is very annoying; but I don't think I would tell madame, Miss Belton. Monsieur goes from home to-day for a few weeks; perhaps by the time he returns he will have forgotten all about you," she said.

"A few weeks? Oh, that is good news," Angela said gaily.

Her face cleared and her eyes brightened. Mrs. Elliot looked at her admiringly, but she sighed as she looked.

"You are far too young and pretty to be governess in this house, Miss Belton. What were your friends about to send you so far from home?" she said kindly.

Angela coloured vividly.

"I shall not stay very long. As soon as madame will release me, I will return home," she said firmly.

"I shall be very sorry, but it will be better so," Mrs. Elliot answered gravely; and "I shall go soon," Angela repeated.

Day by day she waited for madame to speak. Day after day passed, and still she was silent. Angela grew very weary and impatient of the long delay, and the continued silence and suspense. When would it be ended? she wondered. She was anxious to leave St. Petersburg before monsieur, who had gone to visit his estates in the south, returned home. The summons came at last.

Angela had not seen madame for several days. There had been visitors in the house, and a constant succession of dinners, and dances, and receptions; and madame had been too much occupied with her guests even to make her usual visit to the nursery. She came, however, into the schoolroom one evening when Angela was alone. She was writing a letter to Nancie, in answer to one she had received that morning; but she started, and sprang from her chair, and looked up with dilated eyes and flushed cheeks as madame entered.

Had the time arrived? had her release come at last? she thought, and her heart throbbed wildly.

But madame did not speak for a few moments. She swept across the room, and stood by the fire playing idly with her fan. Her pale face was a little flushed; her eyes were brighter than usual, and wore a

restless, excited expression. Angela longed, but did not dare, to break the silence. She could only wait with her hands clasped tightly together, and every pulse in her body throbbing with excitement, till madame should speak.

"Nadine is better to-day, mademoiselle?" she said at last.

"Much better, madame—almost well again."

"That is more than I can say of you, my child." Madame gave a quick glance at Angela's excited face, then looked again at the fire, and swayed her fan slowly to and fro. "It is as I feared," she went on quietly. "This climate does not suit your health. It will be well for you to return to England at once."

"The sooner the better, madame."

Angela's voice thrilled with excitement and delight. It was with difficulty that she forced herself to speak calmly.

"When, madame?"

"Can you be ready to-morrow? A friend—Madame de Verne—leaves St. Petersburg to-morrow for Paris with her family," madame went on, in an odd, dry tone. "Her governess—she is English, like yourself—is too ill to travel, and must remain behind. It would be a mutual convenience, mademoiselle, if you would consent to take her place on the journey."

"Certainly, madame, if you will permit me to leave you so abruptly," Angela answered.

Her voice was as quiet as madame's own, but her eyes flashed, and her hands trembled with eagerness.

"It will be inconvenient, certainly; but we leave St. Petersburg next week. Monsieur desires me to join him in Moscow," madame answered; "and this will be a favourable opportunity, for you will travel as one of Madame de Verne's household. I will procure your 'permit' to-morrow."

"But, madame"—Angela came nearer to the fire, and lowered her voice—"is my mission, then, accomplished? Are the papers in your hands?"

"Hush!"

Madame glanced nervously round the room. She looked eagerly at Angela's attentive face.

"To-night, at the masked ball, I shall receive them," she whispered. "Ah, mademoiselle, you will be careful, discreet—will you not? Remember what the discovery of these papers or of my share in the matter would mean to me—to you—to so many! I have trusted my life—

not mine only, but the lives of so many—in your hands. Ah, for no one else but Paolo would I have run the risk!" And there came a sudden passion into madame's voice, and a sudden fire in her eyes. "But we were boy and girl together, and I loved him well."

Angela took madame's hand, and raised it to her lips.

"Madame may rely on my discretion. I would die sooner than betray my trust," she said fervently.

Madame looked at her intently and smiled.

"I believe you; but be cautious." She moved away from her side as the door opened, and Mrs. Elliot entered. "Elliot will be surprised to hear the news," she said. "See, Miss Belton departs to-morrow."

"To-morrow? I am surprised! Why is that, Miss Belton?"

But Mrs. Elliot, though she expressed astonishment, did not look as if the news surprised her much. No doubt, she thought, madame has been told of monsieur's visits to the schoolroom, and was anxious that the attraction which drew him there should be removed during his absence.

"She looks not well, and is anxious to return," madame said languidly. And then she gathered up her fan and gloves from the table, and, with a smiling "To-morrow, mademoiselle," went out of the room.

Mrs. Elliot, though not surprised, was very curious respecting Angela's sudden departure. The girl found some difficulty in parrying her questions. She explained simply that she was anxious to return home; that her health was suffering; that she felt ill and languid; and that madame had kindly offered to release her from her engagement, and allow her to return home at once. And, as Madame de Verne, who was leaving St. Petersburg for Paris, was in need of a governess for her children, she was glad to embrace the opportunity of travelling under a suitable escort.

Mrs. Elliot agreed that it would be a pity to allow the opportunity to slip; but she smiled and looked mysterious, and hinted that, perhaps, monsieur's admiration for his pretty governess might account for madame's ready acquiescence in her plans. Angela smiled, but did not think it worth while to protest against this idea. What did it matter what Mrs. Elliot thought?

All that day she was restless and excited; she employed the evening in gathering

together and packing her scanty stock of dresses, and books, and work. They did not take much packing; for she had brought very few dresses and no ornaments, and had left the principal part of her wardrobe in Paris, at the house of the Princess di Capri. The time dragged along very slowly. Mrs. Elliot, who was unfeignedly sorry to lose Angela, and was loud in her expressions of regret, brought her work into the schoolroom, and sat there until bedtime. Angela was generally very glad of her company; but on this evening she would willingly have dispensed with it, and she was glad when bedtime came, and Mrs. Elliot folded up her work and kissed her, and said "Good-night".

"I wonder if we shall ever see each other again, my dear?" she said kindly.

"I hope so. I shall be sorry enough to say good-bye to-morrow, and I shall miss you terribly."

"And I you. Oh, I hope we shall meet again some day!"

Angela echoed the wish heartily. Mrs. Elliot had been very kind to her, and Angela was not one who readily forgot a kindness. There were tears in her eyes as she returned the kiss.

"Some day, when you come back to England, we shall meet. Oh, I am sure of it!" she said.

She went to her room as soon as Mrs. Elliot had left her, but there was no sleep for her that night. She heard the carriage drive up, and the door which led to madame's rooms open and close, and heard, too, madame's voice speaking to her maid, and she rose, and partially dressed herself in anticipation of a visit or a summons from madame. Neither came, however, and, after waiting vainly for more than an hour, she undressed and went to bed again. But she could not sleep in peace. Frightful dreams, from which she awoke trembling in every limb, and with great drops of perspiration standing on her brow, haunted her. It was the papers—always the papers—of which she dreamed. She had them in her hand, she was presenting them to Paolo, when suddenly monsieur appeared, and snatched them from her, and hurried her away to prison. She carried them through snowy deserts, through deep ravines, where armed men sprang out from their hiding-places, and tried to force them from her. Once she gave them to Sir Noel in the drawing-room at the Abbey House, and he flung them in the fire, and denounced her as a traitor and conspirator. Her

dreams were so disquieting that at last she rose and lighted the gas, and took a book, and read until the morning came and brought with it more peaceful sleep.

Soon after breakfast she was summoned to madame's room. She was indisposed, and had not yet risen, and, though the room was darkened, Angela could see how wan and anxious the fair face had grown; could see the furtive terror in the blue eyes that met her own with a long, intent gaze. Angela's heart gave a great throb, her face flushed. For a moment the room and all that was in it grew dim and indistinct. She felt madame's gaze grow more and more eager and intense, and with an effort she rallied her courage, and drew up her head with a proud, defiant smile.

"What, shall I fail now! Shall my heart faint now?" she asked herself fiercely. "Oh, never—never! You sent for me, madame; is it to say farewell?" she asked quietly.

"Yes, mademoiselle; I am grieved to say it, but what will you," and madame shrugged her shoulders; "it must be! Justine!" she raised her voice, and called to her maid, who was at the other end of the room, "bring the fur cloak. See, mademoiselle," as the maid brought a silk cloak lined and trimmed with fur from the wardrobe, "it will be cold travelling—you will accept this from me, will you not, as a parting gift?"

"Madame is too good!"

Angela's eyes flashed, and her colour rose; she exchanged a significant look with madame, as she took the cloak from the maid's hands.

"Put it on," madame said languidly. "See, it fits well; we are about the same height, mademoiselle. Come nearer." She raised herself on her pillows, and with her own hands adjusted the fur collar round the white throat. "The silk is a little dusty; bring a brush, Justine;" and then, as the maid left the room, she bent forward, and whispered a few eager words in Angela's ear. "You understand, my child? Ah, be careful!" she whispered.

Angela returned her gaze steadily. Now that the moment of peril had actually arrived, her failing courage revived. She felt strangely bright, and excited, and eager. Her flushed cheeks and bright eyes contrasted strangely with madame's pale, haggard face.

"I quite understand—do not fear, madame, they will be quite safe," she whispered; and then, raising her voice as the

maid re-entered the room, she added: "At what hour do I leave, madame?"

"Madame de Verne will call for you as she drives to the station. You will have no difficulty, mademoiselle; I have taken care that your papers are in order," madame answered; "and you will write from Paris?"

"I will write, madame, if you wish it, as soon as we have crossed the frontier."

"It matters not—well, perhaps it will be better so," madame replied. She spoke carelessly, but the expression of her anxious eyes confirmed the desire. "And now farewell, my child!" She took the girl's hands and kissed her on both cheeks. "Farewell—and bon voyage!" she added after an instant's pause.

"Farewell, madame."

Angela gave a brave smile. She was quite free from the anxieties which at that moment tortured madame, and would continue to torture her until she heard that the papers, which she had concealed so carefully in the fur lining of the cloak, were safe in Paolo's hands. She was sorry to leave the children and Mrs. Elliot, and her heart ached as the remembrance of madame's pale, careworn face rose before her, but to her own personal danger she gave scarcely a thought. She was risking much, but madame had risked infinitely more, and it was more of madame's than of her own danger that she thought. She could and did look forward with infinite delight to the moment when she should place the papers in Paolo's hands, and receive his thanks and praises; but there was no such compensation for poor madame! She had to brave the danger without hope of the reward—to bear the cross, though the palm-branch of victory must be denied to her!

There were tears in Angela's eyes as, after a tender farewell to Mrs. Elliot and the children, she entered the carriage, and, glancing back once more at the great house, saw madame's pale face looking from an upper window. She smiled, and waved her hand in a last farewell, as the carriage drove away. Would they ever meet again? she wondered sadly.

Then came a few days and nights of incessant travelling, for Madame de Verne was anxious to reach Paris as speedily as possible, and did not make any halt on the journey. They were indeed detained a few hours at a town just within the frontier by the sudden illness of one of the children, but with that exception there was

no stoppage. Night and day they travelled; night and day the train bore them farther and farther away from danger—nearer to the goal of her hopes—to her reward. And the days went on and Paris was reached at last; and one evening, as the Princess di Capri was dressing for dinner, news was brought to her that Mdle. Angela Monteith had arrived, and was in the salon.

CHAPTER XVI.

"WELCOME, my child!"

The Princess took the tall stately figure, wrapped in her fur-cloak, tenderly in her arms, and kissed her on both cheeks. She did not ask any questions; she only looked, with a terrible anxiety in her eyes, at the beautiful, smiling face. Her maid was in the room, and she turned to her, and bid her remove Mdle. Angela's cloak.

"One might think you came from the land of snows, my child, by your cloak," she said. "Did you not find it oppressively hot on this warm day?"

"Not too hot. It was a present from Madame Ruskoi," Angela answered. "I value it—oh, above all my wardrobe!" and her eyes brightened, and she gave a reassuring smile and nod, which brought an answering brightness into the Princess's face. She drew a deep breath of relief, then turned so pale and trembling, that her maid looked at her in alarm, and came hastily to her side. She smiled faintly.

"It is nothing—a mere passing faintness. Leave me with Mdle. Monteith for a few moments," she said quietly, but the moment the door closed, she sprang to Angela's side and caught her hand eagerly. "Tell me," she cried breathlessly, "is it good news that you bring? Have you succeeded? Where are the papers?"

"They are here." Angela touched her cloak and smiled. "Lend me a pair of scissors, madame, or a knife. Madame Ruskoi herself concealed them."

"Wait one moment."

The Princess flew to the door, and locked it. She stood by with clasped hands and anxious eyes as Angela deftly unripped the fur-lining from the cloak, and one by one drew out the precious papers. The Princess took and looked at each eagerly, then gave a great sigh. With a passionate gesture she flung her arms round Angela's neck, and kissed her again and again, and lavished wild words of praise and gratitude upon her.

"Paolo himself shall thank you. See"—she placed the papers again in Angela's

hands, and glanced keenly at the flush of delight and expectation which at her words dyed the girl's fair face—"I will not rob you of your reward. You yourself shall place the papers in his hands."

"Is the Count here then, madame?" Angela asked.

"He will be ere night; he leaves for Italy to-morrow. And now, my child, you are weary and hungry, I know. I will take you to your room, and you shall rest until he comes."

It seemed as if the Princess could not do enough to show her gratitude for Angela's timely help. She took the girl to her room; with her own hands she brought her food and wine, and assisted her to undress; and she did not leave the room until she saw the tired eyes close, and knew by the deep, regular breathing that Angela was sleeping.

It was late before she awoke, and she could scarcely at first remember where she was as she looked round the unfamiliar room, and saw the Princess's maid sitting by the toilet-table at work. At the slight movement which Angela made the woman rose and came to the bedside.

"Mademoiselle is rested? Madame la Princesse is in the salon. She wishes mademoiselle to know that the Count Paolo has arrived," she said.

Angela sprang up from her bed. At that most welcome intelligence her weariness and languor left her, and she felt strangely happy and excited. With the assistance of the maid she made a hasty toilette, and descended to the salon.

Paolo stood by the fireplace talking to the Princess, but at the sound of the opening door he raised his head, and looked round eagerly as the tall, noble figure entered.

She came across the room to his side; her eyes were full of an exquisite happiness, upon her lips a radiant smile was trembling. She held out the papers to him with eager hands.

"Monsieur, take them; they are here!" she cried in her sweet, excited voice; and Paolo, in silence, but with an odd, softened look on his noble face, an odd, passionate glance in his brilliant eyes, took the papers and bowed over the hand that held them.

"Mademoiselle, I cannot thank you. The prayers and gratitude of the many whom you have saved from horrors and misery too terrible to name, will be your best reward," he said in a choked voice. "For me, I am content to owe you a lifelong gratitude. I have no wish to cancel that debt."

"It was cancelled long ago, monsieur." Angela gave a sweet, low laugh which thrilled through Paolo's heart. "Oh, I have longed for this moment for years—longed to show that I had not forgotten! And, after all, what have I done? You spoke of a cancelled debt, monsieur. Mine to you still remains unpaid, uncanceled. Ah! do you think the little trifling risk I have run—the trifling danger I have braved, can wipe away that debt?" the girl cried passionately and incoherently.

"We are quits, then, mademoiselle!" Paolo kissed her hand again. His own hands were trembling, his heart was throbbing wildly; it was with difficulty that he forced himself to speak quietly. "See, mademoiselle, this paper"—and he selected one from the rest and held it out to Angela—"contains a list of names—many noble, all true and faithful. If this had fallen into the hands of the Russian police, it would have been the death-warrant of all whose names are written there. So," and his eyes gleamed, "I give you your reward, mademoiselle—the dearest reward that a noble soul like yours could claim—burn the paper; place those whose names are written there in safety."

He took one of the wax-candles from the piano near which they were standing, and held it to Angela. The Princess, too, had left her seat and drawn nearer. She was very pale, and her lips quivered nervously. Her own name was missing from the list, but there was more than one written there that was almost as precious and as dear to her as her own. And so she came nearer and watched in breathless silence as Angela, with a steady hand, held the paper to the candle, and the flame leaped up, and the paper shrivelled, and blackened, and fell in a little heap of grey tinder on the table. Paolo gave a deep sigh of relief and thanksgiving as he looked at it.

"To think that that little heap of grey ashes should mean peace and safety to so many homes!" he said.

Angela remained only another fortnight in Paris, but into that short space of time she contrived to compress an amazing amount of sight-seeing and gaiety. She was fully aware of the questions that would be asked both by Nancie and Mrs. Monteith on her return; that she would be expected to have seen everything that ought to be seen, to have visited every place of note. So she conscientiously did all in her power to enable herself to satisfy their

curiosity, and went to picture-galleries, and theatres, and operas with a steady perseverance which won the Princess's puzzled admiration and wonder.

But in spite of all this hard work Nancie was by no means satisfied with the very meagre amount of information which was all that her questions extorted from Angela concerning the Paris visit. Nancie was secretly inclined to be severe, and to consider that Angela had sadly wasted her time and opportunities. But if Nancie was disappointed, Mrs. Monteith was more than satisfied with the result of the visit; with Angela's improved appearance and manners; with the pretty dresses which she had brought from Paris; and above all, delighted with the present—a handsome gold bracelet—which the Princess had sent to her—Mrs. Monteith—"as a slight recognition of the kindness she had shown to Angela". She was never weary of showing the trinket to her friends and expatiating on the charms of the giver, "the dear Princess di Capri—Angela's great friend."

Nancie calculated that three respectable but aspiring matrons had been driven to the verge of insanity, and two entire families—originally strict Conservatives—to the most uncompromising Radicalism by the Princess's gift.

But though she laughed at and made fun of her mother's aristocratic proclivities, Nancie also thought that the visit had done Angela a world of good. She had lost her dreamy, absorbed expression; was brighter and merrier than she had been since the ball; and seemed, indeed, as the time passed and July came nearer, to grow prettier and sweeter every day.

She came into the breakfast-room one morning where Nancie was sitting at work, with a letter in her hand and such a jubilant expression of countenance, that Nancie dropped her work and enquired what delightful event had occurred.

"Something pleasant has happened, or is about to happen—I can see that in your expressive countenance, my child," she said.

Angela laughed.

"Your conjecture is correct. Something delightful is about to happen," she said gaily. "Noel comes this afternoon!"

"Comes here?"

"No, to Lady Sara's. His uncle is coming to pay a long-promised visit to the old lady, and he has persuaded Noel to accompany him. I dare say," and Angela smiled, "he did need much persuading.

He will bring his uncle to the Abbey this evening in time for coffee."

"What branch of the family does this uncle belong to, I wonder?" Nancie said. "Is he a Lansdell or a Clarige? Noel has such heaps of relations."

"He does not say," Angela answered.

"I hope Lady Sara will not inflict herself upon us," Nancie went on. "I should like to make a favourable impression on my future relatives, and that estimable female has always a demoralising effect upon me. I know that her mental attitude towards me is one of strong disapproval; and I always feel, when in her presence, as if I must say or do something to justify it. Does she produce a similar effect upon you, Angela?"

"Very similar; only that, instead of irritating, she depresses me. Little as she approves of you, I have found still less favour in her sight. I know she takes the gloomiest views of Noel's chances of matrimonial happiness."

"Of course she does! She looks upon you just as Rebecca looked upon the daughters of Heth," Nancie said flippantly. "You are only half English, you know; and all foreigners, but especially Italians, are her pet abomination. Oh, I do hope she will stay at home to-night!"

But Nancie's hopes were doomed to disappointment; for, when the evening came, and Lady Sara's carriage drove up to the door, Lady Sara was the first to alight and enter the drawing-room. The evening had been very warm, and, although the wax candles over the piano and mantelpiece were lighted, the gas was turned quite low, the blinds were undrawn, and the windows stood wide open to admit the evening breeze. Mrs. Monteith was dozing in her favourite chair; Angela was at the piano, playing softly to herself; and Nancie sat by the window, with Lansdell leaning over her chair. The dusky, scented room, the quiet figures by the window, the soft light which fell on Angela's golden head, and on the white hands that touched softly the keys of the piano, the flowers, the low music—all combined to make up a pleasant picture of home-life.

The sound of the opening door awoke Mrs. Monteith. She started up, and went to meet her visitors in a little confusion. Sir Noel spoke to her hurriedly, and then made his way across the room to the piano, where Angela still sat, and, under cover of the twilight, put his arm round her waist and kissed her. He had not seen

her since her Paris visit, and he gazed at her lovely face with delighted pride.

"My dearest, how well you look! Your visit has done you no end of good," he whispered. "I have never seen you look so beautiful and happy before."

Angela smiled and blushed exquisitely.

"Of course I am happy to-night," she said, with a little emphasis on the last word. She looked up in his face with such a sweet flattery in her eyes, that Noel felt as if he must kiss her again.

"I have brought my uncle, Major Clarige, to see you, sweet. Come," and he took her hand, "let me present you to him."

Angela rose obediently. As she left the piano, a servant, at a sign from Mrs. Monteith, turned up the gas. The sudden glare dazzled and half-blinded Angela. She came forward out of the twilight, a tall, slender, white-robed figure, with dreamy, half-dazzled eyes. Her golden hair was all ruffled round her forehead; the pretty colour, which Noel's embrace had called up into her cheeks, still lingered there.

"This is my uncle, Major Clarige," Noel said, as the Major stepped forward from Mrs. Monteith's side. "Uncle John, let me introduce you to Miss Angela Monteith."

For once in his life the perfect manners, for which Major Clarige was justly celebrated, deserted him. He came forward, it is true, and bowed to Angela; but the expression on his face was one of utter consternation and surprise, his eye-glass dropped from his eye, and he stared as if suddenly confronted by some appalling vision. Noel was partly amused, partly surprised at the unexpected effect which, as he thought, Angela's beauty had produced upon his usually unimpressible uncle.

"Why, Major," he said gaily, "Angela will think you have left all your good manners behind in St. Petersburg with the Russian beauties."

He did not look at Angela as he spoke, but he felt the hand which he still held in his own suddenly relax its clasp, and grow very cold. Still Major Clarige did not speak, and his eyes were fixed on Angela's face with a peculiar, questioning look. Noel, in surprise at the silence and the strange look in his uncle's eyes, looked at Angela.

She had grown very pale; the pretty colour which he had admired so much a few minutes before had left her face altogether; even her lips were white, and, as he looked, she raised her eyes and cast on Major Clarige a long, beseeching look, which was—or so Noel fancied—full of a

piteous appeal. He felt too startled—too aghast to speak; he gave a quick look at Angela, then glared at his uncle with defiant, questioning eyes. But, by this time, Major Clarige had partially recovered from his surprise; he picked up his glass and stuck it into his eye with a jaunty air, but with a hand that shook nervously; and forced a smile.

"I beg ten thousand pardons for my rudeness, Noel. Miss Monteith will forgive me when I tell her that I was startled by her strong likeness to a lady whom I saw in Russia. She was English governess in the household of M. Ruskoi," he added, and he looked significantly at Angela.

She did not speak. She bent her head quickly, and moved away from Noel's side to the window, where Nancie sat. Sir Noel gave a short, half-relieved, half-angry laugh.

"These chance likenesses are very startling sometimes," he said.

"Very." Major Clarige spoke shortly, and his eyes followed Angela across the room, and watched her curiously.

"Who was the lady whom you say Angela resembles?"

"She was governess in M. Ruskoi's family. Monsieur is," and the Major laughed and pulled his moustache, "some-what of a gay Lothario. He introduced me to his pretty governess one evening when madame was safely out of the way."

"And she was like Miss Monteith?"

"As like as two peas in a pod."

The Major laughed as he answered the question. He had quite recovered his self-possession, and now he left Sir Noel and joined the group by the window. Angela looked up as he approached; their eyes met, but the appealing look in Angela's had changed to one of quiet defiance, and she drew up her tall figure and faced him proudly. One hand rested on Nancie's chair; the Major looked at it curiously, and his memory went back to that night, scarcely thought of since then, when, with M. Ruskoi, he had entered the schoolroom, and the governess had risen and faced them, with one hand resting on her chair. He had noticed then the rings she wore; the hoop of diamonds, the thick gold circle with the quaint design. It was strange to see the duplicates of those rings on the finger of his nephew's betrothed bride! Nancie's voice roused him from his reverie.

"And so you have been in Russia, Major Clarige? When did you return?"

"About a fortnight ago. I spent a few

days in Berlin, and a week in Paris on my return. I only got home last week."

"Paris? Then you and Angela can compare your experiences," Nancie said carelessly. "She spent six weeks there quite lately; but," and Nancie looked up at the tall, white figure by her side, "she did not make very good use of her time. She does not appear to have seen half so much in those six weeks, as I contrived to see in the fortnight that I and father spent there a few years ago."

"Perhaps Miss Monteith was not in Paris during the whole of the six weeks," the Major said quietly, but with an unpleasant, sneering tone in his voice.

Nancie looked surprised, and Angela grew paler than before. She shivered slightly, and her eyes glowed, but she did not speak, and Major Clarige, after waiting a moment, went on:

"You did not visit St. Petersburg, I presume, Miss Angela?"

He waited so pointedly for the answer, that Angela was obliged to speak.

Her throat felt hot and dry, and her voice sounded strange and harsh.

"St. Petersburg! I had never any wish to go there," she said abruptly; and she drew up her head, and flung a look of defiance at her tormentor's face.

"Indeed! I had hoped that we might have compared our Russian experiences," he said, with a short laugh.

"That, unfortunately, is impossible," Angela said defiantly.

She left Nancie's side, and, approaching Sir Noel, put her hand on his arm.

"Come into the garden, Noel; this room is stifling," she said feverishly.

And Noel, nothing loth, followed her from the room into the cool garden, fragrant with the scent of the lilies, and mignonette, and of the yellow roses that twined round the porch.

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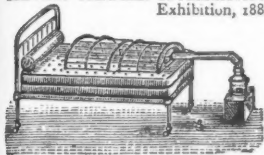
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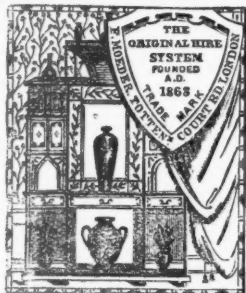


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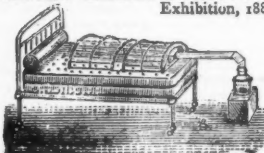
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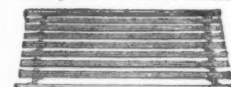
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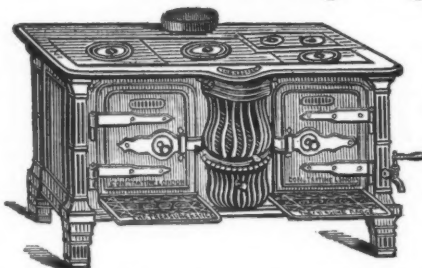


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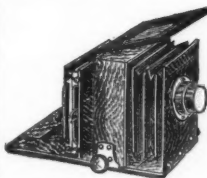
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